

# ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HART). The Chair must remind all Members not to urge Senate action.

## CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. WALSH submitted the following conference report on the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 107-272)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2620) "making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes", having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, as follows:

In lieu of the matter stricken and inserted by said amendment, insert:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, namely:

### TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

#### VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

##### COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61); pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 92 Stat. 2508); and burial benefits, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of article IV of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 (50 U.S.C. App. 540 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 50 U.S.C. App. 540-548; 43 Stat. 122, 123; 45 Stat. 735; 76 Stat. 1198), \$24,944,288,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That not to exceed \$17,940,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be reimbursed to "General operating expenses" and "Medical care" for necessary expenses in implementing those provisions authorized in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, and in the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992 (38 U.S.C. chapters 51, 53, and 55), the funding source for which is specifically provided as the "Compensation and pensions" appropriate:

tion: Provided further, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to "Medical facilities revolving fund" to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

##### READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 51, 53, 55, and 61), \$2,135,000,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, other than under subsection (a)(1), (2), (5) and (11) of that section, shall be charged to this account.

##### VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 19; 70 Stat. 887; 72 Stat. 487, \$26,200,000, to remain available until expended.

##### VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, as amended: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended: Provided further, That during fiscal year 2002, within the resources available, not to exceed \$300,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$164,497,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for "General operating expenses".

##### EDUCATION LOAN FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct loans, \$1,000, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. 3698, as amended: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended: Provided further, That these funds are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$3,400.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$64,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for "General operating expenses".

##### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct loans, \$72,000, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 31, as amended: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$3,301,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$274,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for "General operating expenses".

##### NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, subchapter V, as amended, \$544,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for "General operating expenses".

##### GUARANTEED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING LOANS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the administrative expenses to carry out the guaranteed transitional housing loan program authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, subchapter VI, not to exceed \$750,000 of the amounts appropriated by this Act for "General operating expenses" and "Medical care" may be expended.

##### VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

##### MEDICAL CARE

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, and domiciliary facilities; for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the department; and furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; funeral, burial, and other expenses incidental thereto for beneficiaries receiving care in the department; administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the department; oversight, engineering and architectural activities not charged to project cost; repairing, altering, improving or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; uniforms or allowances therefor, as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5901-5902; aid to State homes as authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1741; administrative and legal expenses of the department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the department as authorized under 38 U.S.C. chapter 17, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq., \$21,331,164,000, plus reimbursements: Provided, That of the funds made available under this heading, \$675,000,000 is for the equipment and land and structures object classifications only, which amount shall not become available for obligation until August 1, 2002, and shall remain available until September 30, 2003: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed \$900,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2003: Provided further, That of the funds made available under this heading for non-recurring maintenance and repair (NRM) activities, \$15,000,000 shall be available without fiscal year limitation to support the NRM activities necessary to implement Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) activities: Provided further, That from amounts appropriated under this heading, additional amounts, as designated by the Secretary no later than September 30, 2002, may be used for CARES activities without fiscal year limitation: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct by contract a program of recovery audits for the fee basis and other medical services contracts with respect to payments for hospital care; and, notwithstanding 31 U.S.C. 3302(b), amounts collected, by setoff or otherwise, as the result of such audits shall be available, without fiscal year limitation, for the purposes for which funds are appropriated under this heading and the purposes of paying a contractor a percent of the amount collected as a result of an audit carried out by the contractor: Provided further, That all amounts so collected under the preceding proviso with respect to a designated health care region (as that term is defined in 38 U.S.C. 1729A(d)(2)) shall be allocated, net of payments to the contractor, to that region.

In addition, in conformance with Public Law 105-33 establishing the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care Collections Fund, such sums as may be deposited to such Fund pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1729A may be transferred to this